

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 4406
E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SNAR, EC
SUBJECT: MEETING WITH FINANCE MINISTER ON PERFORMANCE OF
CUSTOMS POLICE IN NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT.

1. THE CHARGE MET WITH FINANCE MINISTER JUAN REYNA
ON JUNE 26 TO DISCUSS THE INADEQUATE PERFORMANCE OF
THE CUSTOMS MILITARY POLICE IN NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT.
THE CHARGE POINTED OUT THE SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTION OF
USG TO CUSTOMS MILITARY POLICE WITH VERY LIMITED RESULTS
OVER THE YEARS IN TERMS OF NARCOTICS SEIZURES. COM-
PARISONS WERE MADE OF TOTAL SEIZURES FOR CURRENT YEAR
WITH THOSE OF PREVIOUS YEARS, SHOWING A DECLINE FOR 1977
AND THE YEAR THUS FAR OF 1978. THE CHARGE CITED THE ALLEGED
COMMITMENT OF GOE AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS TO CARRY OUT A
MORE VIGOROUS NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT PROGRAM, AND STATED
THAT THE MILITARY CUSTOMS POLICE PERFORMANCE DOES NOT
SUBSTANTIATE THE GOE DECLARED COMMITMENT. DURING THE
GENERAL DISCUSSION OF HOW TO OBTAIN BETTER PERFORMANCE,
THE CHARGE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF INDIVIDUAL IN-
CENTIVES FOR CUSTOMS POLICEMEN TO MAKE NARCOTICS SEIZURES.

2. THE MINISTER OF FINANCE STATED THAT SINCE HE HAD
TAKEN OFFICE TWO MONTHS AGO HE HAD STRESSED TO THE
CUSTOMS POLICE THE NEED FOR IMPROVED PERFORMANCE IN
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NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT. HE SAID THAT THE MINISTER OF
HEALTH, ATTORNEY GENERAL AND HE HAD MET SEVERAL TIMES
TO DISCUSS WAYS TO LIVE UP TO THE GOE'S COMMITMENT TO
IMPROVED NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT AND PREVENTION, AND HE
PROMISED THAT HE WOULD GIVE EVEN FURTHER ATTENTION TO
THE MATTER WITHIN HIS MINISTRY. HE AGREED THAT SOMETHING
NEEDED TO BE BUILT INTO THE SYSTEM TO REWARD MILITARY

CUSTOMS POLICEMEN FOR SEIZURES OF NARCOTICS, AND SAID HE HIMSELF WOULD EXPLORE WHAT MIGHT BE DONE.

3. COMMENT: THE FINANCE MINISTER APPEARED TO BE SINCERE IN HIS PLEDGE TO TRY TO IMPROVE MILITARY CUSTOMS POLICE NARCOTICS ENFORCEMENT EFFORT. HE WAS OBVIOUSLY SURPRISED TO LEARN THAT SEIZURES HAD DECLINED FROM 1976. WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT CHARGE'S REPRESENTATION AND SUBSEQUENT FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS WITH THE CUSTOMS POLICE WILL BRING A GREATER ATTENTION TO NARCOTICS CONTROL AND THEREBY CONTRIBUTE TO THE MISSION'S EFFORTS TO IMPEDE THE FLOW OF ILLICIT DRUGS TO THE UNITED STATES.
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